

CLAIMS:

1. A telecommunications platform having a plurality of communications links of which only a portion of the links are enabled for use through the activation of a first base license key, comprising:

5 a licensing framework for activating an upgrade license key to enable additional ones of the plurality of links; and

10 a traffic monitoring element for measuring the traffic level of the platform and for generating data related to the measured traffic level for determining whether the number of links used is greater than that provided for by the base license key.

15 2. A telecommunications platform according to claim 1, wherein the traffic monitoring element is enabled for use by the licensing framework upon the activation of an upgrade license key.

20 3. A telecommunications platform according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the upgrade license key has a time-limited validity period, and further comprising a license enforcement element for deactivating the plurality of links enabled by the activation of the upgrade license key upon the expiry of the validity period.

25 4. A telecommunications platform according to claim 3, wherein the license enforcement element is arranged to progressively deactivate the plurality of links over a predefinable time period.

5. A telecommunications platform according to claim 3, wherein the license enforcement element is arranged to deactivate all of the plurality of links immediately upon expiry of the upgrade license key.

30 6. A telecommunications platform according to claim 3, wherein license enforcement element is adapted to deactivate use of the traffic monitoring element upon expiry of the upgrade license key.

7. A telecommunications platform according to any preceding claim, further comprising a replicated telecommunications platform connected in a high availability arrangement through a high-availability framework

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8. A method of operating a telecommunications platform having a plurality of communications links of which only a portion of the links are enabled for use through the activation of a first base license key, comprising:

activating an upgrade license key to enable additional ones of the plurality
10 of links;

measuring the traffic level of the platform; and
generating data related to the measured traffic level for determining whether the
number of links used is greater than that provided for by the base license key.

15 9. A method according to claim 8, wherein the step of measuring is adapted to
commence measuring the traffic level in response to the activation of the upgrade
license key.

20 10. A method according to claim 8 or 9, wherein the upgrade license key has a
time-limited validity, and further comprising deactivating the plurality of links
enabled by the activation of the upgrade license key upon the expiry of the
upgrade license key.

25 11. A method according to claim 10, wherein the step of deactivating the links is
arranged to progressively deactivate the plurality of links over a predefinable time
period.

30 12. A method according to claim 10, wherein the step of deactivating the links is
arranged to immediately deactivate all of the links upon expiry of the upgrade
license key.

13. A method according to claim 10, 11, or 12, wherein the step of deactivating further comprises suspending the monitoring of the traffic levels upon expiry of the upgrade license key.
- 5 14. A method according to any preceding claim, further comprising replicating the telecommunications platform through a high-availability framework.
- 10 15. A telecommunications platform having a plurality of communications links of which only a portion of the links are enabled for use through the activation of a first base license key, comprising:
 - a licensing framework for activating an upgrade license key to temporarily enable additional ones of the plurality of links.
- 15 16. A telecommunications platform having a plurality of available communications links of which only a portion of the links are enabled for use with the platform through the activation of a first base license key, comprising:
 - a licensing framework for activating an upgrade license key to enable additional ones of the plurality of links;
 - a traffic monitoring element for measuring, in response to the activation of the upgrade license key, the traffic level of the platform and for generating data related to the measured traffic level for determining when it is determined that the measured traffic level is indicative that the number of links used is greater than that provided for by the base license key.
- 20 25 17. A telecommunications platform having a plurality of communications links of which only a first portion of the links are enabled for use, comprising:
 - a licensing framework for activating an upgrade license key to enable additional ones of the plurality of links; and
 - a traffic monitoring element for measuring the traffic level of the platform and for generating data related to the measured traffic level for determining whether the number of links used exceeds the number in the first portion.